

The
Melville Society
N E W S L E T T E R

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Plans are under way for the publication of **Moby-Dick Centennial Papers**, a volume intended to include all the papers read at several centennial celebrations held in various parts of the United States during 1951. An editorial committee is being formed, and collection of the papers has already begun. Although a few of the papers will appear also in periodicals, every member of the Society will wish to have a copy of this important volume, especially since, as it now seems possible, **all** the centennial papers will be brought together in it.

Negotiations now being conducted with an excellent university press indicate that an attractive cloth-bound volume can be published in a limited quantity for approximately \$3.50 per copy. The secretary would be interested in knowing how many members are willing to purchase the book at this price. If necessary to reduce the cost per volume, a paper binding might be used. Expressions of opinion from our members will aid in arriving at the proper decision.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Since a number of requests have been received for a list of the papers read at the **Moby-Dick** centennial celebrations this year, such a list is here presented:

At Nantucket, Massachusetts (August 15).

"From the Look-Out," by Edouard A. Stackpole.

"Melville and Nantucket," by Wilson L. Heflin.

At Williamstown, Massachusetts (September 24).

"The Social Setting of **Moby-Dick**," by Henry Nash Smith.

"Melville's Prisoners," by Harrison Hayford.

"In Nomine Diaboli," by Henry A. Murray.

"Melville and the Transcendentalists," by Perry Miller.

"Melville and Hawthorne," by Randall Stewart.

"Broadhall," by Agnes Morewood.

Remarks by Eleanor Melville Metcalf.

At Greeley, Colorado (November 17).

"The Reputation of **Moby-Dick**," by Hugh W. Hetherington.

"Pessimism in **Moby-Dick**," by Ernest E. Leisy.

"A Preface to **Moby-Dick**," by Tyrus Hillway.

In addition to the above, a program for students at the University of Notre Dame included lectures by Louis Hasley, John T. Frederick, Ernest S. Sandeen, and Howard P. Vincent. At Princeton University an exhibition of Melville materials was held in the library, and Henry A. Murray read the paper previously presented at Williamstown. Final word has not been received as to the program planned at Oberlin College.

NOTES AND NEWS

Luther S. Mansfield lectured on Melville at a meeting of library clubs held on October 4 at Deerfield Academy.

Michigan State College has renewed a \$200 stipend for clerical work in connection with C. Merton Babcock's proposed Melville lexicon. He solicits explanations and definitions of words used by Melville which do not appear in the standard dictionaries. He would also like to have someone supply the dates of composition or conception of the following sketches (all in the Constable edition of **Billy Budd**): "The Marquis de Grandvin," "Portrait of a Gentleman," "To Major John Gentian," "Jack Gentian," "Major Gentian and Colonel J. Bunkum," "The Cincinnati," and "Fragment."

Published in November: Jay Leyda's **The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville**, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company). \$12.50.

Published on September 28: Leon Howard's **Herman Melville: A Biography** (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press). \$5.00.

Billy Budd, the play by Louis O. Coxe and Robert Chapman, opened at

the Brattle Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on August 7.

C. R. ("Tip") Roseberry, who conducts the "Roving Reporter" column in the Albany (N. Y.) *Times Union*, has been trying to interest citizens of his city in recognizing Melville as an Albany author. He favors the idea, discussed in Williamstown, of marking appropriately the houses in which Melville lived as a young man. He disagrees with William H. Gilman's identification of the house in North Troy and believes that it was the yellow brick house now located at 526 First Avenue.

Moby-Dick was picked recently by the UNESCO as one of twenty important American literary works to be translated and circulated abroad as representative of this country's best literary products.

Billy Budd, an opera by Benjamin Britten with libretto by E. M. Forster and Eric Crozier, opened in London at the Covent Garden theater on Saturday, December 1. Based on Melville's novel, this all-male production was reportedly received "amid tremendous acclamation." Theodor Uppman, twenty-six-year-old American baritone, sang the title role.

Eleanor Melville Metcalf is at work on a book of reminiscences and letters of the Melville family.

Dozens of recipes for the preparation of whale meat have been received by the secretary as the result of the announcement that whale steaks would be served at the *Moby-Dick* centennial conference in Greeley. Since the whale is neither a "beast of the field" or "fowl of the air," the Vatican has indicated that whale meat may be eaten by Catholics on Fridays.

Annual dues for 1952 (\$2) may now be paid to the secretary. Make checks payable to The Melville Society and address them to Tyrus Hillway, Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado. The treasury, incidentally, has not yet fully recovered from the deficit of last year. A financial state-

ment will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The secretary has recently suggested to Randall Stewart, president of the American Literature Group, that a committee undertake the publication of usable abstracts of unpublished theses written on the major American authors. Many excellent materials now lie fallow in these unpublished studies, and it is not always possible to know what a thesis contains merely from its title. Abstracts which are made readily available to scholars would prevent much duplication of effort which has occurred in the past.

Billy Budd and Other Stories, with an introduction by Rex Warner, has been published in the Chiltern Library series (London: John Lehmann) and is distributed by the United Book Guild, \$2.

Invitations to join the Society are being sent to members of English departments in Australia and the Pacific islands. A personal note from any present member to acquaintances in colleges of the Pacific area would be helpful. Walter Bezanson, who proposed the idea, believes that interest may be developed there and that it may incidentally lead to further information about Melville's Pacific years.

Hugh W. Hetherington, author of the first doctoral dissertation on Melville (still unpublished), is continuing his investigation of Melville's reputation and would appreciate communications from anyone discovering new items, especially those appearing during Melville's lifetime. He may be addressed at U. of Wyoming, Laramie.

CAHOON CHECK-LIST

The check-list prepared by Herbert Cahoon of all Melville items in the New York Public Library is now available to members of the Society at a cost of only 50 cents. Please write for copies directly to the library, enclosing remittance. The check-list (23 pp.) originally appeared in the June and July (1951) issues of the library's *Bulletin*.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER
IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE
Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested
in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to
facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to
stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage
literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Executive com-
mittee: Howard P. Vincent (1951), president; Willard Thorp
(1952); Eleanor Melville Metcalf (1953); Merton M. Sealts
(1954); William C. Gilman (1955). The annual membership
fee of two dollars includes subscription to the Newsletter and
other services. Address Tyrus Hillway, secretary, 423 Pequot
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